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History of Advertising in Pakistan

Kamran Ahmed Siddiqui ^a, Aisha Kamran Siddiqui ^{b,*}

^a University of Dammam, Saudi Arabia

^b Small & Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), Lahore, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to present a historical overview of advertising in Pakistan and highlight major developments within a particular era. Discourse analysis was used to present the dynamics in the marketplace that have changed the way advertising has been practiced in this region. The development and evolution of advertising have been extraordinary in Pakistan. Started as less than \$ 1000 industry inflated to several billion dollars industry in just sixty four years. Over the period of time the advertising industry underwent different phases of evolution. These phases can be categorized on the bases of major socio-political conditions prevailing in the country. First Era (1947 – 1964) Characterizes by small number of players in the newly formed advertising industry; very few businesses taking advantage of advertising techniques; advertising reach limiting to mainly urban geographic regions; advertising medium limited to print ads; Radio emerged as new promising advertising media. Second Era (1964 – 1978) Arrival of television stations made a drastic change in the existing advertising practices. The new visual messaging services seemed more attractive and effective source of communication. Third Era (1978 – 1988) New advertising ideologies took over the old ones. The colour TV broadcast and classical jingles made it a vintage era. Fourth Era (1988 – 1998) New graphic technologies were used to facilitate the limited time frame concepts. Fifth Era (1998 – 2008) The rise of golden age witnessed modern advertising and visual effects. Industry growth increased 500 times with talents and man power. Sixth Era (2008 – 2010) Animations, Indian production and Indian celebrities highlighted the glamorous era. Global recession felt and low budgeted advertising industry-tier produced low-rate and below par advertisements. Based on their interests, users of this study have been classified into two distinct categories, i.e., academics and corporate users. Academics may find this research instrumental in their teachings and research activities. The corporate users may act as mentors for this research by sharing their relevant experience and may note lessons for their corporate practices.

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*Corresponding Author:
Aishamjad@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Advertising in Pakistan has generally followed the trends and innovations adopted globally. It has responded to the changing business environment, media technologies and cultural and ethical pick-up lines. In 1947 soon after the independence there had been very few mediums of advertising and all of these were only covering the local population at the time. The advertising industry in Pakistan grew over time. In the beginning the local businesses were utilizing the available medium that was mostly newspapers, magazines and digests. As the new businesses started to emerge the race to compete became intense. The new players forced the industry to be more professional and creative in order to survive and gain competitive edge. This phenomenon is still the changing factor in the advent of presently developed advertising industry. Under the influence of multinationals coming into Pakistan and investing into new businesses, many foreign advertising agencies also established their offices and joined hands with many already present local institutions to step into the arena. The advertising industry remained influenced by the cultural and religious beliefs of the natives and remained entrapped within these barriers. Over the period of time the industry shifted towards different modes and underwent different phases of evolution.

2. Methodology

This research uses discourse analysis as the main methodological and analytical tool. Discourse analysis is not only a method in social scientific research [1] but also a theoretical perspective that provides opportunity to analyze public discourses [2] especially advertisements. Several studies using discourse analysis have been conducted in past to analyze advertisements [3] and their discourses have elaborated different theories on media, communication and marketing [4].

3. Discussion

This article provides a brief historical overview of advertising, highlights its differences, and then presents a list of different era in the history of advertising and finally it presents salient features in every era and provides a springboard for the further development of advertising in the next millennium. Advertising in Pakistan can be categorized into six distinct eras over a period of time.

Table 1
Different Eras of Advertising in Pakistan

| Era | Period |
|-----|----------------|
| I | 1947–1964 |
| II | 1964-1978 |
| III | 1978-1988 |
| IV | 1988-1998 |
| V | 1998-2008 |
| VI | 2008 - To date |

In the first Era of advertising industry in Pakistan, 1947 – 1964, there were not many players and generally the businesses only focused to create awareness in people in certain limited geographic regions; mainly urban, through print ads that were a popular advertising medium available for such purposes. The other advertising medium at the time that influenced the public was the radio. In the second Era, 1964-1978, the arrival of television made a drastic change in the existing advertising practices. The new visual messaging services seemed more attractive and effective source of communication. In the next Era from 1978 to 1988 the new advertising ideologies started to take over the old ones that gradually went over to effect the fourth Era of the evolution, 1988-1998, where new graphic technologies were used to facilitate the limited time frame concepts. In the fifth, 1998-2008 and sixth phase, 2008 - todate, the modern technology completely took over the advertising industry and celebrity endorsements and faces across the border started to appear in the ads of top selling brands.

Era I: 1947- 1964: Before the independence, there were very few ad agencies based in Pakistan as most of these agencies had their head offices in India. After the independence of undivided India, few independent agencies started experimenting with the available medium of communications at that time. Newspapers were one major channel of communication for such commercial purposes. Nawa-i-Waqt (1940) [5], Daily Jang (1939) [6] and Dawn News (1941) [7] were the oldest newspapers of the country. Many of the advertising agencies preferred to choose these papers. At the time the advertisements predominantly used to be black and white and were based upon the product features and a tag line for sales. Ads that appeared in print papers were mainly for consumer goods like biscuits, soap, medicines, weapons, electronics, publications, edibles etc. At that time very few ads could be seen with human impressions as the rigid ideology of society kept the ethical restrictions over the advertisers but very few dared to cross these barriers successfully. Later on as the society

liberalized, these ethical barriers vanished. The noticeable thing in this advertising was the images of female characters and the choice of words

In the 1950's the advertising used to use the characters and images giving the sense of patriotism. The dressing of man, woman and child and public service messages all have a patriotic touch to have an emotional impact over the consumer.

Tag lines always had been the most memorable part of these prints. Tibet soap's "twice as beautiful" [8], West End Watch Co's "Trains Don't Wait" [9], Pakistan Railway's "Don't Rob the Nation" [10], Habib Bank "Merabhi to hai"(it is mine also) famous radio advertisement ; are few good examples of taglines used.

Before the 1950's the advertising and print media industry was pretty disorganized. As the investments started to flow into the businesses the new authoritative bodies established. The All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) was founded in 1953 by the major editors and publishers to facilitate the exchange of views and to protect the rights of newspapers by giving them a voice to appeal unfair decisions against them [11] [12]. Today, APNS has hundreds of publications and advertising agencies under its accredited body [11].

Apart from the print media, the radio Pakistan under the banner of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) started its transmission as an independent entity and because of its reach it soon became popular and medium of choice for mass advertising. In late 1950's and early 1960's advertisers used the radio as the main tool for their promotional campaigns. PBC had its reach in major cities that made it more lucrative and in early 60's new technology shifted the circle of influence. The earlier advertising thru radio was only mere announcements; that later evolved and included jingles, musicals and poetry to increase the recall. The printed versions of these advertisements were displayed in print media (Jang). Cinema Advertising began in early 1960 which was also the start of the golden era of Pakistan cinema industry that kept growing for a decade [13]. The best trend ads of that time are from Lipton, Dalda and Surf.

Era II: 1964-1978: Advertising trends changed after the arrival of television PTV. Pakistan's state owned television PTV started broadcasting in November 1964 [14]. With this new media tool focus immediately shifted towards this medium to capture the viewers in urban areas. In the 1960's PTV and radio Pakistan attracted masses and with this new technology new trends evolved and ads based on classic movie songs and featuring movie concepts started to appear as the advertisements of popular brands. The popular actors and actresses became the brand symbols and the celebrity endorsements became the new source of effective communication. The most memorable of these ads are Lipton's "Chai Chahye" [15]

Pakistan Advertising Association (PAA) was established in the year 1973 [16] and was registered with the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Pakistan. This Association was also the member of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry FPCCI, as is Advertising Association of Pakistan (AAP) currently [17].

Era III: 1978 – 1988: As the only televised broadcasting channel of Pakistan PTV grew, so as its viewership expanded and in return it became the most effective and efficient channel for advertisers. Now with the introduction of colour TV in the country the new horizons of advertising opened. Due to the attractive nature of this medium the competition geared up to take advantage over the competitors.

In 70's and 80's PTV dramas (soaps) became extremely famous in Pakistan and neighbouring. At this stage new international ideologies of limited time frame was introduced and hence competition grew among the advertisers to get these specific time slots. Viewer's habit of sitting in front of screens came under study and gave new scientific basis to advertising professionals to understand and develop the new concepts of consumer behaviour. Many international advertising agencies started to step into the Pakistan's ad industry and went into joint ventures, mergers or partnerships to get a foot into the market. The trademarks of the advertisements in this era were the quality of pictures, selection of songs and music themes for the product recall.

The best trend ads of the time were produced for Dentonic: "AikchutkiDentonic Ki Chutkibajatayhee" [18] Naaz pan Masala's: "Meri Muthi main band Hay kia,(whats do I have in my palm) bata do na, (Please guess) Naaz pan masaala" (Naaz pan Masaala) [19] Naurus: "BhoolnajaanaPhir Papa" (Please don't forget again Papa) [20] Cherry Blossom, [21] Mitchell's Jubilee, [22] Binnaca toothpaste [23] Kiwi Shoe Polish [24] and others.

Era IV: 1988-1998: With new computer based technologies and graphic arts it greatly impacted the way of advertising in the late 80's and last decade of the 20th century. The new graphically animated ads quickly attracted the viewership due to its uniqueness and this pushed the whole industry to shift focus to these emerging ways of appealing the television viewers. Thematic animated TVCs became the first choice of advertisers.

The new ideologies based on relation between product, quality and nature emerged and the advertisers focused on integrating these three themes in short conceptual art work. More innovative ideas swam across the screens. In 1983 PTV sports division was established and that immediately became the goldmine for PTV. All the international matches were vastly sponsored by multinationals. The sports figures became icons and cricketers, hockey players suddenly started appearing in ads very frequently. Wasim Akram, the famous Pakistani cricketer appeared in a social ad against smoking as his pitch in that ad is still in fame. "Nahi main cigarette nahipeeta" (No I don't smoke) [25].

The competition level rose to high levels and succeeded in bringing such great ideas that could build campaigns. Ideas like Lipton TVC, that got international award featuring Nayyar Sultana in Pakistan and Rekha in India launched with "Hum Bhool Gaye HarBaar Magar TeraPyarNahiBholay"; (I forgot everything but your Love).

The best trendy ads of that time come from Candy Biscuits, "Kisi Aur Main VohBaarKahan"; (Who else has this specialty) [26]; Dentonic: "Dentonic Twice a everyday" [27]; Disprin: "Dard kaahal, 2 golitalwar kay nishanwali", (Solution for head ache, two pills with a sword mark) [28]; Dettol: "Aap kay gharkamuhafiz", (defender of your family) [29]; State Life Insurance of Pakistan "A Khudamerayabbusalamatrahai" [30] Metro Milan Agarbati [31].

The colored print ads started appearing in newspapers in this same phase. On the other hand new flex printing was introduced at the end of this era that became a popular outdoor medium due to cost effectiveness.

Another major development of this era is the formal association of major advertisers in Pakistan under the banner of Pakistan Advertiser's Society (PAS) [32]. It was established in 1996 to collectively present the common interest(s) of the advertisers, and keeping a representation of 80% of the ad-spend of Pakistan.

Era V: 1998-2008: The new modern advertising effects were introduced with visual effects. Many world class brands adopted the use of visually and acoustically catching effects other than tag lines and animations. Due to overload of mass advertising by all businesses, advertisers needed to keep the identity and this brought the concept of “Short concepts create fames”. This was the time when the advertising industry started archive records of events and activities being done in this arena. Industry growth increased 500 times in term of talent and man power. Celebrity endorsement converted into brand ambassadorship. This new development was heavily relying on sport celebrities due to absence of strong media personalities. Indian crew and technology was vastly hired for the creation of Pakistani TVCs [33] [34] [35]. The ad industry based upon Co-production with India became a reality and international players played a vital role in binding the two distinct but geographically close, culturally similar markets.

PEMRA was established in 2002 [36] that started issuing licenses to new broadcasting channels and suddenly there was a huge pool of channels covering each and every geographic and demographic region. The postal stamps also became a new medium of advertising among banks and oil companies like MCB, Habib Bank, Shell, PARCOetc [37].

The best trend ads of that time are from Coke (Brrrrrrrrrr) [38], Ufone (All about U) [39] [40], Jazz [41], Olpers [42] [43], Haleeb’s “Sub say GarhaDoodh” (The thickest Milk) [44], Habib Bank [45], Fair & Lovely [46], Cadbury [47], Supreme Tea [48] etc.

Era VI: 2008 and beyond: In 2008 Indian faces become brand ambassadors for Pakistani market, like Katrina Kaif [49]. Modern animation techniques and Indian production created the final shape of Pakistani TVC like Safeguard through the character of Commander Safeguard [50]. Low budgeted advertising industry shaping up with low rates and sub-standard production quality. However Pakistani celebs remain the ambassadors for the local consumer market.

The best trend ads of this time come from Walls Badami [51], Zong mobile service [52], Lux bath soap [53], Head&Shoulder shampoo [54], Ufone [55], Jazz [56], Tarang tea whitener [57] etc. Pepsi introduced an amazingly innovative advertising campaign and tagline; the pitching point was, “Pepsi per paanch rupee kisnakamkiyay”(who cut the price of Pepsi by 5 rupees) [58].

Advertising Industry Today: These days not a single aspect of our lives remains untapped by advertising. Popularity of a TV programs are normally judged directly proportional to the length of commercial breaks. A popular sixty (60) minutes program usually holds fifteen (15) minutes of advertisements. This ratio was 1/10 just a decade back. Similarly the success of any print media can be judged as the number of advertisements acquired and published in these dailies, weeklies or monthlies.

At this moment Pakistani ad industry can easily be segmented on four categories: (a) pure Pakistani - low budgeted, (b) pure Pakistani - high budgeted, (c) Coproduction between India and Pakistan – high budgeted, (d) pure Indian - very high budgeted.

At the end of 2010 the advertising spend in Pakistan is 30.0 Billion Rupees (approximately 350 Million US Dollars). TV advertising claims 58% of the Total Advertising Budget in the country and shows the relevance of TV as the most popular medium of communication in Pakistan. Other media include print (24%), Radio (4%), Outdoor (9%), and other media (5%) [59].

Another interesting point the industry wise spend change during the last decade, Telecommunications sector became the largest ad spend in Pakistan followed by the Food (#2), Drink (#3), Cleaning(#4), Hair Care(#5), Soaps(#6), Confectionary(#7), Real Estate(#8), Skin Care(#9), Household Goods(#10) [60].

4. Concluding Thoughts

The primary motivation for this study is the desire to fill the gap in knowledge about the evolution of advertising and its practices in Pakistan. Traditional research has not been significantly successful in presenting a systematic data on advertising in Pakistan. The development and evolution of advertising have been extraordinary in Pakistan. Started as less than \$ 1000 industry inflated to several billion dollars industry in just sixty four years. Over the period of time the industry shifted towards different modes and underwent different phases of evolution. These phases can be categorized over a period of time. First Era (1947 – 1964) characterized by small number of players in the newly formed advertising industry; very few businesses taking advantage of advertising techniques; advertising reach limiting to mainly urban geographic regions; advertising medium limited to print ads. Second Era (1964 – 1978) Arrival of television stations made a drastic change in the existing advertising

practices. The new visual messaging services seemed more attractive and effective. Third Era (1978 – 1988). The colour TV broadcast and classical jingles made it a vintage era. Fourth Era (1988 – 1998). New graphic technologies were used to facilitate the limited time frame concepts. Fifth Era (1998 – 2008). The rise of golden age witnessed modern advertising and visual effects. Industry growth increased 500 times with talents and man power. Sixth Era (2008 – todate) Animations, Indian production and Indian celebrities highlighted the glamorous era. Global recession felt and low budgeted advertising industry-tier produced low-rate and below par advertisements.

5. Practical Implications

This research provides various implications for practicing managers and advertising professionals. It shows advertising in has evolved over period of time and still evolving. New advertising mediums are emerging and new techniques are coming at rapid pace. This warrants the advertising professionals to be more proactive and ready to absorb new trends coming their ways. Creativity is declining and more “me-too” and copy advertisements are getting popular. Advertisements development budgets are going down and media costs are increasing. New opportunities are emerging for advertising and media entrepreneurs.

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